

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A removable ball of the foot insert for placement into footwear at a position in correspondence with a forefoot portion of the footwear, comprising:

5 a substantially planar member including a lower surface and an upper surface; and

a raised area at a predetermined location corresponding to a ball of the foot when the insert is placed into the footwear for separating bones of second and third metatarsals of a foot.

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2. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 1, wherein the raised area has a height that generally decreases outwardly from a center of said raised area.

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3. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 2, wherein the raised area has a generally convex shape.

4. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 1, further comprising a low friction cover layer secured to the upper surface of the planar member.

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5. A removable ball of the foot insert for placement into footwear at a position in correspondence with a forefoot portion of the footwear, comprising:

25 a substantially planar member made from a viscoelastic gel, the planar member including a lower surface and an upper surface; and

a plurality of spaced apart spring walls formed from a viscoelastic gel and extending from the lower surface of the planar member at a predetermined area corresponding to a ball of the foot when the insert is placed into the footwear, for separating bones of second and third metatarsals of the foot, said spring walls having heights that generally decrease outwardly from a center of said predetermined area.

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6. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 5, wherein the viscoelastic gel of the planar member has a hardness greater than a hardness of the viscoelastic gel of the spring walls.

5 7. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 6, wherein the viscoelastic gel of the planar member has a Shore OO hardness about 65 to about 75, and the viscoelastic gel of the spring walls has a Shore OO hardness about 40 to about 50.

10 8. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 5, wherein each spring wall extends in a generally lengthwise direction of the insert.

9. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 5, wherein each spring wall has a height that decreases from a center thereof toward opposite ends thereof.

15 10. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 5, wherein spring walls on opposite sides of a center one of the spring walls decrease in height transversely to an extending direction of the center one of the spring walls.

20 11. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 5, wherein the insert has a substantially teardrop shape.

25 12. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 5, further comprising a low friction cover layer secured to the upper surface of the planar member.

13. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 5, wherein each of said spring walls is formed in a generally sinusoidal wave shape.

30 14. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 13, wherein said plurality of spring walls are formed in substantially parallel, spaced-apart relation.

15. The removable ball of foot insert according to claim 14, wherein a spacing between adjacent ones of said spring walls is greater than the width of said spring walls.

5 16. A removable ball of the foot insert for placement into footwear at a position in correspondence with a forefoot portion of the footwear, comprising:

a substantially planar member made from a viscoelastic gel, the planar member including a lower surface and an upper surface;

10 a raised area formed from a viscoelastic gel and extending from one of the lower surface and upper surface of the planar member at a predetermined area corresponding to a ball of the foot when the insert is placed into the footwear, for separating bones of second and third metatarsals of the foot; and

the viscoelastic gel of the planar member having a hardness greater than a hardness of the viscoelastic gel of raised area.

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17. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 16, wherein said raised area has a height that generally decreases outwardly from a center of said predetermined area.

20 18. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 16, wherein the viscoelastic gel of the planar member has a Shore OO hardness about 65 to about 75, and the viscoelastic gel of the raised area has a Shore OO hardness about 40 to about 50.

25 19. The removable ball of the foot insert according to claim 16, further comprising a low friction cover layer secured to the upper surface of the planar member.